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Rome Mini-Chapter

Please read in Our World pages 218-221, 222-225, 232-235, and 238. No reading in A Little History of the World.

The ancient civilization of Rome was founded on the Italian peninsula. The city was founded on the Latium Plain. The Tiber River flows through the center of the city.

According to mythology, twin brothers named Romulus and Remus founded Rome. After Rome’s last king, whose name was Tarquinius was overthrown, Rome became a Republic, which is a government in which the people elected representatives to speak for them and pass laws. (The U.S.A. has this form of government.)

Rome was divided up into two social groups: plebeians and patricians. Plebeians are low class people who work for patricians, who are rich land. The patricians were not always fair towards the plebeians. So, the plebeians got the patricians to publish Rome’s first set of laws. These were called The Twelve Tables.

The most powerful branch of Rome’s government was the   
Senate. It was made up of patricians. It controlled law-making and how money was spent in Rome. Tribunes were elected by the plebeians. They asked the Senate to pass laws for the plebeians. There were two powerful Consuls. One was head of the army one was a chief judge.

Rome wanted to be the unquestioned leader of the entire Mediterranean region. So they went to war over who would control the island of Sicily. These wars were called the Punic War.

Julius Caesar was Rome’s first dictator, which is an all-powerful ruler. Caesar was Rome a wealthy patrician family, and he had built up his power as a Senator, Consul, and later as military governor of Roman Gaul. After Julius Caesar was stabbed to death in the Senate, his adopted stepson, named Augtus Caesar, became emperor. Rome grew in power and in the size of the area that it controlled. The time when Augustus Caesar ruled was called the Plax Romana, which means Roman Peace. To pay for its huge building projects, Rome collected money from those it had conquered. It counted the numbers of people whom it had conquered; they called this count a census. Roman soldiers built an immense network of merchants. Water was carried to new Roman cities on raised water bridges called aqueducts. Roman citizens enjoyed bloody entertainment in Rome’s immense colosseum, which is where gladiators fought to the death.